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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/836,525	04/17/2001	Erik C. Houge	HOUGE 20-21-15-27-21	6596

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HITT GAINES P.C.
P.O. BOX 832570
RICHARDSON, TX 75083

EXAMINER

ALEXANDER, LYLE

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1743

DATE MAILED: 09/24/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/836,525

Applicant(s)

HOUGE ET AL.

Examiner

Lyle A Alexander

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on ____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) ____.
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) ____ 6) ☐ Other:

Claim R jections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1,3-5,9-11,13-14, 16 and 19- 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Benninghoven et al.

Benninghoven et al. teach a laser activated mass spectrometer having a sample holder, a laser beam to evaporate the sample and a mass spectrometer to analyze the sample. The laser activated mass spectrometer has been read on the claimed analytical tool and more specifically on the claimed “focused ion beam tool”. Figure 6 teaches sample holder(25) that holds sample(17). Column 9 line 23 teaches the sample(17) is placed on a polymeric carrier. Lines 44+ teach holder(25) can be made of platinum, silver, steel, etc. The holder(25) has been read on the claimed “sampler body” and the claimed “platen having first and second sides” on the polymeric carrier.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

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The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Claims 2,6-8,12, 14 and 16-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Benninghoven et al. in view of Harris et al. (995') or Harris et al. (862').

See Benninghoven et al. supra.

Benninghoven et al. are silent to the claimed plunger coupled to the sampler body and caps.

Both Harris et al. references teach it is known to use a plunger to present a sample to a mass spectrometer. The plunger has the advantages of easy, inexpensive

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and accurate delivery of the sample. These references also teach caps/cover are well known to prevent contamination to the sample or premature discharge.

It would have been within the skill of the art to modify Benninghoven et al. in view of Harris et al. (995') or Harris et al. (862') and use a plunger to deliver the samples and a cap/cover to gain the above advantages.

Claim 15 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Benninghoven et al. in view of Houge et al.

See Benninghoven et al. supra.

Benninghoven et al. are silent to the claimed means to rotate the sample.

Houge et al. teach a mass spectrometer device having a turret system(300) that rotates the sample into the position facing the mass spectrometer.

The court decided In re Venner et al. (120 USPQ 192) that it is within the skill of the art to provide automatic function to replace a manual process.

It would have been within the skill of the art to further modify Benninghoven et al. in view of Houge et al. and automate the sample presentation to the mass by using the turret taught by Houge et al. to gain the advantages associated with automation (e.g. time savings, lower technician cost, reproducibility, 24/7 operation, etc.) or in view of Venner et al. (e.g. automation of a manual process is well known).

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Lyle A Alexander whose telephone number is 703-308-3893. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jill Warden can be reached on 703-308-4037. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-0651.



Lyle A Alexander
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1743

J